Bronze Age pottery (and stone) from Climping, on the West Sussex Coastal Plain

Assemblages from Fordacres and Yapton Road

by
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(pottery texts commissioned by Archaeology South-East)

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An assemblage of Bronze Age pottery from the West Sussex Coastal Plain

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Introduction

The prehistoric pottery assemblage from Climping comprises 348 sherds weighing approximately three kilograms (Table 1). Three period groups are represented: Early Bronze Age, Middle Bronze Age (MBA) and Late Bronze Age (LBA). Early Bronze Age material, which includes the rim of a Collared Urn, was present in two features only: pit 74 and ditch 109. Probable MBA material occurred in small quantities right across the site and includes two near complete Deverel-Rimbury bossed-jars. The vast majority of the LBA material came from a group of four inter-cutting pits (32, 34, 36 and 81). It falls within an early, undecorated phase of the post Deverel-Rimbury pottery tradition. The Early Bronze Age pottery is not thought to have been in situ. All was badly abraded and two sherds, including both two sherds illustrated here, come from a probable MBA pit (74). By contrast the two near complete MBA vessels and the LBA pottery were unabraded. This perhaps indicates that they were buried soon after they went out of use. The features that yielded them are therefore likely to be of similar or not much later date.

The Early Bronze Age pottery

Two very weathered feature sherds occurred in a distinct grog-tempered fabric (nos 1 and 2, fabric G). Both fabric G and the rim form and twisted-cord impressed decoration of vessel 2 (Fig. 1) are characteristic of Collared Urn locally. An approximate parallel for vessel 2 comes from the Cattle Market, Chichester (Musson 1954, no 350). Vessel 1 is less easy to parallel but its fabric is identical to that of vessel 2.

Middle Bronze Age pottery

Fabrics

Four fabrics belong to the MBA (fabrics F1, F4, F10, and F11: Tables 1 and 2). These include both medium flint-tempered wares, dated because of their occurrence in Deverel-Rimbury form, and coarse and very coarse flint-tempered wares, dated by their thickness and because of the widespread occurrence of similar fabrics in MBA assemblages from elsewhere. No fine wares were present. As a group — albeit small — these fabrics are characteristic of Sussex MBA

assemblages. Both Mile Oak and Itford Hill, for example, yielded analogous fabrics (Hamilton 2002, 43–4; Ellison 1972, 106). It is important to note, however, that the medium flint-tempered wares would have been placed in the LBA group had they not occurred in Deverel-Rimbury form. This is a recurring problem in later Bronze Age archaeology; indeed our understanding of this period has very probably been skewed by it. Here it is indicative of a continuity in potting traditions which transcends the typological difference that define the two periods, possibly a late phase of MBA activity on site, and probably an early phase of LBA activity there (see below). A further fabric (fabric F2), although occurring in LBA form, has a clear MBA association (Table 2).

Context	Fabric and likely date range of fabric											Context date
	EBA = Early Bronze Age MBA = Middle Bronze Age LBA = Late Bronze Age											
	EBA											
		MBA										All fabrics
					LBA							
	G	*F4*	*F10*	*F11*	*F1*	*F2*	*F6*	*F7*	*F8*	*F5*	*F3*	
	Number of sherds/weight in grams											
110	4/5	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	4/5
118	0/0	0/0	0/0	1/44	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	1/44
120	0/0	0/0	1/6	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	3/5
128	0/0	1/1	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	1/1
143	0/0	4/267	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	4/267
75	2/11	0/0	50/737	0/0	0/0	4/15	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	57/763
9	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	1/7	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	1/7
19	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	5/2	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	2/8	7/10
33	0/0	8/20	0/0	0/0	20/133	69/279	6/23	0/0	0/0	2/11	2/13	107/479
35	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	5/118	34/96	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	1/4	40/218
37	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	20/203	0/0	3/85	0/0	1/6	3/39	27/333
43	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	5/25	0/0	0/0	19/560	0/0	0/0	24/585
51	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	1/6	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	1/6
55	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	1/2	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	1/2
65	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	1/4	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	1/4
69	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	3/6	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	3/6
71	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	3/9	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	3/9
81	0/0	1/4	0/0	0/0	0/0	55/352	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	56/356
101	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	1/3	0/0	1/3
140	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	1/37	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	5/8	0/0	6/45
Σ	0.98/0.98	1.66/1.66	51/0.23	0.02/0.02	26/288	202/1006	0.26/0.26	0.04/0.04	0.03/0.03	1.31/1.31	0.73/0.73	348/3198

Table 1. Prehistoric Pottery. Quantification and Dating

Typology

Apart from a small number of very thick sherds (e.g. Fig. 2, unnumbered), the principal typological features diagnostic of a MBA date are the two bossed-jars

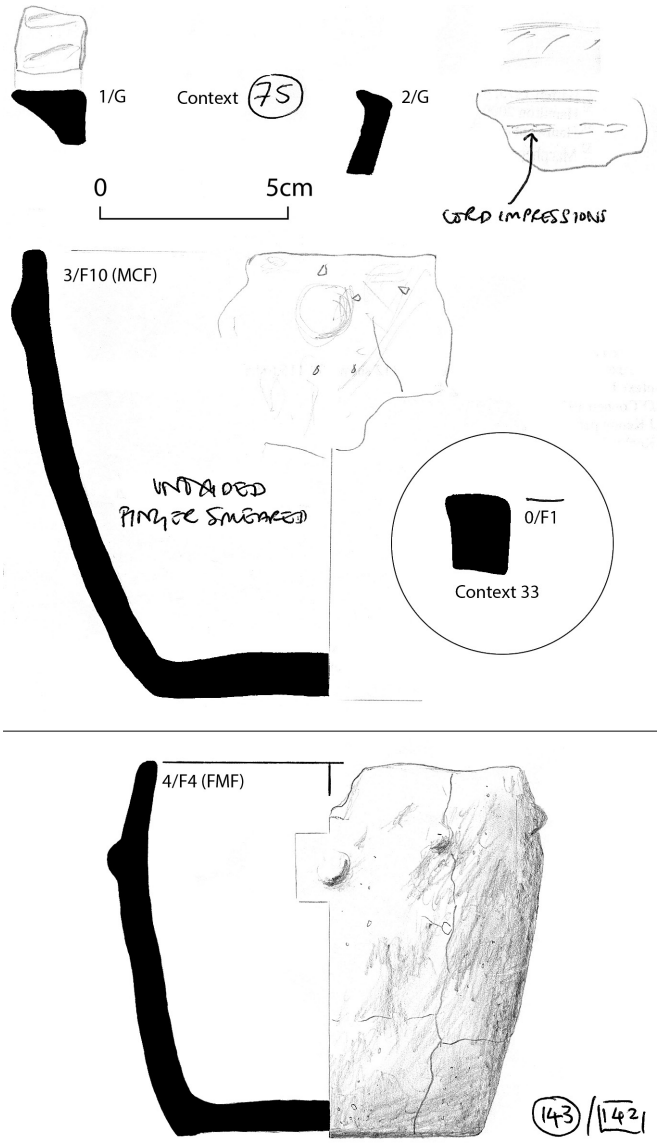

Figure 1. Collared Urn and Deverel-Rimbury pottery from Ford Acres, Climping

(nos 3 and 4). Similar Sussex vessels come from Haywards Heath, Lewes, Park Brow and Patcham (Musson 1954, fig 6). These are well contextualized in terms of their finds-spots, but none is known to have been directly associated with material which could be independently dated to the MBA. Larger jars with bosses, however, while only very occasionally associated with Sussex post Deverel-Rimbury assemblages, are a recurrent feature of Sussex Deverel-Rimbury assemblages (Ellison 1978, 34) and are known from at least four sites on the coastal plain: Angmering (two adjacent sites) (Seager Thomas 2002a and b), Drayton (Seager Thomas 2010) and Selsey (Kenny 1989, 15: fig. 5.2). Further afield at least two Deverel-Rimbury assemblages incorporate analogous vessels. A cremation cemetery at Farnham, Surrey, yielded two, both of similar size to but in coarser fabrics than the Climping vessels (Lowther 1939, pl. 18; Frere

1961, pl. 7), and North Shoebury in Essex another two (Brown 1995, fig. 62.15). It is likely therefore that they belong to the Deverel-Rimbury tradition. This places them in the MBA somewhere between *c.* 1500 and 1150 Cal BC (Needham 1996, 133; Hamilton 2002, Tab. 7.30).

Category	Fabric	Inclusions	Thickness in mm	Firing	Tradition
		Fine wares Medium wares Coarse wares F = burnt flint G = grog Q = quartz sand S = siderite nodules Grain size classification after PPRG 1991, 35		U = unoxidized O = oxidized X = exterior I = interior C = core	CU = Collared Urn DR = Deverel-Rimbury PDR = post Deverel-Rimbury
Grog-tempered	*Fabric 9*	<1% coarse sand-sized to small granule-sized F. 7-10% coarse sand-sized to small granule-sized G. Up to 25% fine Q.	*c.* 6	UXIC (grey grog)	CU (No 1)
Flint-tempered	*Fabric 6*	1-3% medium to coarse sand-size F. 10% fine to medium Q. 1% carbonaceous material visible in oxidized sherds. 1% medium sand-sized red G or S.	*c.* 5	O to UXIC	PDR (Nos 11, 12 and 20)
	Fabric 7	15-20% very coarse sand-sized F.	*c.* 10	UXIC	PDR (No. 17)
	Fabric 8	7-10% medium sand-sized to small granule-sized F. Rare (<1%), rounded, coarse sand-sized to small granule-sized S. 10% chaff impressions.	9 – 10	OX, UIC	PDR (No 21)
	Fabric 10	5% coarse sand-sized to (occasionally) large granule-sized F. Laminated.	*c.* 8	UXIC	DR (No 3)
	Fabric 11	5% coarse sand-sized to large granule-sized F.	15	UXIC (light grey core)	DR (thick body sherds)
Sandy, flint-tempered	*Fabric 4*	7-10% medium to coarse sand-sized F. <1% large granule-sized F. 30% Q.	6 – 8	OX, UIC	DR (No 4)
	Fabric 2	7-10% medium sand-sized to small granule-sized F. 30% fine Q. <1% rounded, coarse sand-sized to small granule-sized S.	6 – 10	O to UXI, UC	PDR (No 18)/DR (Pit 74)
	Fabric 5	3-5% coarse sand-sized to small granule-size F. 35% fine to medium Q.	*c.* 9	OX, UIC	?PDR (pits 32 and 34). Associated with no wholly MBA fabrics or features
	Fabric 3	5-10% coarse sand-size to small granule-sized F. 2-3% red, coarse sand-sized G. 30% fine Q.	6 – 8	UXIC	PDR (No 16)
	Fabric 1	5% coarse sand-sized to large granule-sized F. 1-3% carbonaceous material visible in oxidized sherds. 30% fine Q.	10-14	O to UX, UIC	DR (thick body sherds)/?PDR (No 5)

Table 2. Ford Acres, Climping: prehistoric pottery fabrics

Late Bronze Age pottery

Fabrics

Five fabrics belong to the LBA (Fabrics F2, F3, F5, F6 and F7: Tables 1 and 2). Individually, these have close parallels in assemblages from other LBA sites on

the Coastal Plain, such as Knapp Farm, Bosham (Hamilton 1997b, 80), Ford (Hamilton 2004), Selsey (Seager Thomas 1998; 2001) and Wickbourne, Littlehampton (unpub.). There is, however, a difference in *feel* between the Climping pottery and pottery from these other LBA sites. This is attributable to a variety of things. There are few fine ware sherds amongst the Climping assemblage (Table 1). The temper density of fabric 7 is unusually high. (Though in view of the small number of sherds comprising the assemblage as a whole, this single vessel has perhaps assumed a significance it does not merit). The proportion of sand in several Climping fabrics — when compared those from proximate LBA sites like Ford and Wickbourne — is high. This is likely to relate to the source of potting clay: it differed from that used at Ford and Wickbourne. By contrast the similarity between fabrics from these two sites suggest a common source of supply. The fabrics comprising the assemblage more closely references the preceding MBA tradition.

Typology

Characteristic of but not restricted to the LBA post Deverel-Rimbury pottery tradition are the pinching and vertical finger-furrows on vessel 16 (cf. Knapp Farm: Hamilton 1997, fig. 8.9), the pinched bases of vessels 9, 13 and 21 (cf. Selsey: Seager Thomas 2001, fig. 3.9), the burnishing of vessel 20 (*ibid*. fig. 3.12), the thin bodies of vessels 15, 16 and 21 (cf. Kingston Buci: Curwen & Hawkes 1931, figs 6 and 17), and the heavily-gritted bases of vessels 5 and 9 (Varley Halls, Brighton: Hamilton 1997, 41). Otherwise the types identified comprise a small selection only of a much wider range of types and sizes of vessels associated with it. Three vessels are identified as post Deverel-Rimbury shouldered jars (nos 16, 18 and 20) (cf. Plumpton Plain B, Kingston Buci, Farnham and St Mary's Hospital, Carshalton: Hawkes 1935, fig. 13; Curwen & Hawkes 1931; Elsdon 1982, fig. 6.29; Adkins & Needham 1985), but it is likely that a number of other feature sherds derive from them. Other vessels, which are characteristic of the tradition, are a convex-sided jar (no 17), a sagging ring or coil-built base (no 21), and a bi-partite bowl (no 11). The first of these is thick, much finger-tipped, and has a slight internal bevel to the rim (*cf.* Farnham: Elsdon 1982, fig. 6.38). (Owing to its large mouth diameter and roughened surface, it is possible to suggest this is a cooking pot: Howard 1981, fig. 1.3). The second, probably another shouldered jar, falls within the upper size-range of LBA pottery (cf. Farnham: Lowther 1939, fig. 81.27). It was fashioned from a chaff-rich fabric that would have been strong prior to firing and light afterwards. The last is thin-bodied and in fine, fabric roughly finished (cf. Kingston Hill and Runnymede: Field & Needham 1986, fig. 3.9; Longley 1991, fig 102). Less easy to parallel, but tied to the tradition by its pinched appearance, is a coarse, thin-bodied vessel with an open-mouth and fingered cordons inside and outside of the rim (no. 15) (cf. Stanwell: O'Connell 1990, fig. 32.107).

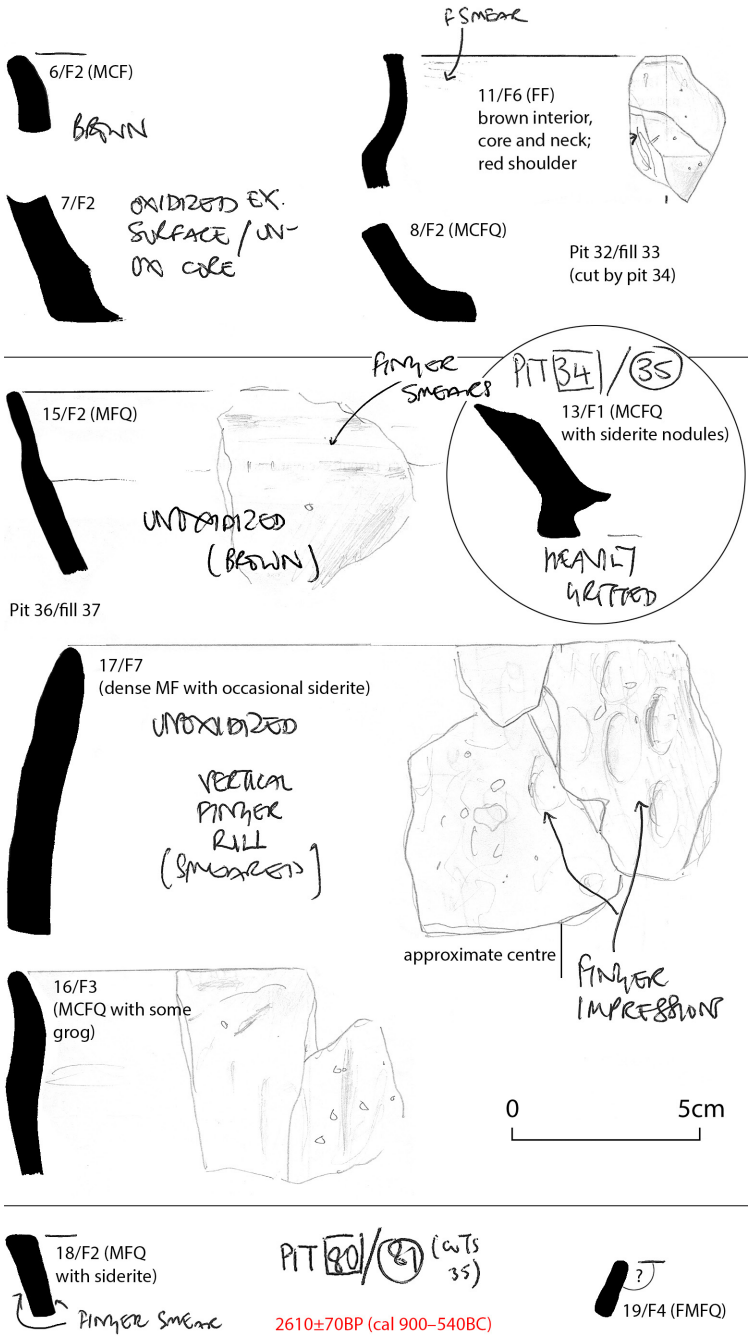

Figure 2. Post Deverel-Rimbury pottery from Ford Acres, Climping

Repair

Straddling a crack running tangentially to the clay rings or coil from which vessel 21 was fashioned are two holes, drilled post-firing. Since much of the base survives and no other holes are present it seems unlikely that they relate to the function of the vessel. Possibly they are repair or 'rivet' holes (Ellison 1972, 111). If so, this implies that an intact replacement was either not available,

owing perhaps to seasonal or off-site production; not worth using (in this case); or not affordable. Vessel 21 was especially valued.

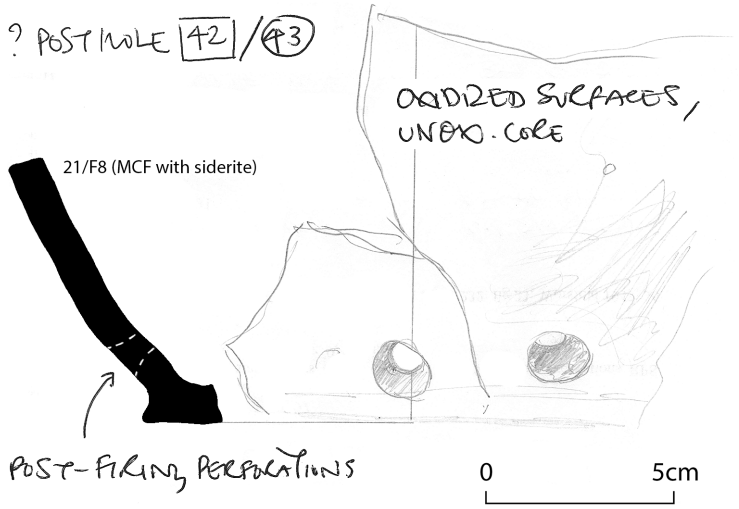

Figure 3. Post Deverel-Rimbury vessel from Ford Acres, Climping, with repair holes

Dating

The post Deverel-Rimbury tradition spans, on radiocarbon evidence, a period between *c.* 1150 and 500 Cal BC (Needham 1996, 134–47; Barrett 1980). Close typological parallels for the Climping assemblage from sites such as Kingston Buci (Curwen & Hawkes 1931), Rams Hill in Berkshire (Barrett 1975) and Farnham (Lowther 1939; Elsdon 1982) place it somewhere near the beginning of this period. All of these sites yielded typologically discrete groups of 'undecorated' post Deverel-Rimbury pottery. The assemblages from Kingston Buci and Farnham are not well stratified, and both lack radiocarbon dated associations, but Rams Hill yielded both radiocarbon dated associations and stratigraphic relationships which distinguished it from a later, decorated assemblage. These place Ram's Hill at or around the beginning of the first millennium BC. Assuming that the tradition represented by these assemblages is contemporary in different parts of the country, this should place the occupation of Climping at approximately the same date. At its earliest, a radiocarbon date of 900–550 cal BC on wood charcoal from fill 81,[1] a context which was stratigraphically late in the Climping sequence, is consistent with this view. A lack of close parallels for the Climping assemblage in the post Deverel-Rimbury assemblages from nearby Ford and Wickbourne suggests that it is of a different date. Despite Ford's earlier radiocarbon dates (Hamilton 2003, 84) this should, on typological grounds, be earlier rather than later.

[1] 2610±70BP@2 sigma: BETA-152860

Catalogue

Early Bronze Age

Context 74

1. Flattened, diagonally (?)cord-impressed, expanded rim and possible cavetto-neck (Fig. 1). *Fabric 9.* Black surfaces and core and grey grog.
2. Cord-impressed, neck (Fig. 1). *Fabric 9.* Black interior surface and core and grey grog; burnt, grey-brown exterior surface and breaks.

Middle Bronze Age

Context 74

3. Flat base, slightly convex sides and flat, upright rim of small bossed-jar. One surviving boss of *c.* 1.6 cm. Rim diameter 16 cm (Fig. 1). *Fabric 10.* Dark grey surfaces and core.

Context 143

4. Flat base, slightly convex sides and in-turned, flat to rounded rim of small bossed-jar. Three surviving bosses of *c.* 0.1 cm diameter approximately 3.5 cm apart. Rim diameter *c.* 10 cm (Fig. 1). *Fabric 4.* Buff to dark grey exterior and dark grey interior surfaces and core.

Late Bronze Age

Context 33

5. Flat, heavily-gritted base. *Fabric 1.* Red-brown exterior surfaces and orange core.
6. Rounded rim and concave neck of (?)shouldered-jar (Fig. 2). *Fabric 2.* Brown surfaces and core.
7. Flat, straight-sided, slightly flared base (Fig. 2). *Fabric 2.* Orange exterior surfaces and dark grey interior surfaces and core.
8. Flat, convex-sided base (Fig. 2). *Fabric 2.* Dark brown surfaces and dark grey core.
9. Heavily-gritted, pinched base (Fig. 2). *Fabric 2.* Dark brown exterior surfaces and dark grey interior surfaces and core.
10. Slightly pinched base. *Fabric 2.* Buff exterior surfaces and dark grey interior surfaces and core.
11. Angular shoulder, concave neck and flat, slightly expanded rim of small shouldered bowl or jar (Fig. 2). *Fabric 6.* Patchy brown to dark grey surfaces and core. Possibly part of vessel 12.
12. Flat, slightly convex-sided base. *Fabric 6.* Dark grey surfaces and core. Possibly part of vessel 11.

Context 35

13. Flat, pinched base (Fig. 2). *Fabric 1.* Yellow brown exterior surfaces and dark grey interior surfaces and core.
14. Flat, (?)convex-sided base. *Fabric 2.* Dark grey surfaces and core.

Context 37

15. Wide-mouthed bowl, with slightly squared rim and internal and external finger-impressed cordons (Fig. 2). *Fabric 2.* Dark grey exterior surfaces and core and dark red-brown interior surfaces.
16. Vertically finger-furrowed shoulder, rounded-rim, and slightly everted neck of weakly shouldered jar (Fig. 2). *Fabric 3.* Dark grey surfaces and core with buff, burnt patches on breaks and surfaces.
17. Rounded rim and finger-pinched body of large convex jar (Fig. 2). *Fabric 7.* Dark grey surfaces and core.

Context 81

18. Squared rim and flared neck of (?)shouldered-jar (Figure 2.18). *Fabric 2.* Dark grey surfaces and core.
19. Rim (Fig. 2). *Fabric 4.* Buff exterior surfaces and dark grey interior surfaces and core.
20. Round, burnished shoulder. *Fabric 6.* Dark grey surfaces and core with buff, burnt patch on break and exterior surface.

Context 43

21. Flat, finger-pinched, convex-sided base. Spiraling (coil-built) body. Funnel-shaped, post-firing holes either side of one break (Fig. 3). *Fabric 8.* Buff exterior surfaces and dark grey interior surfaces and core.

Site status

Middle Bronze Age

Given their excellent preservation, their rarity (locally), and the context of their closest parallels (all but one had funerary associations), it is tempting to interpret the two bossed jars as 'special deposits' (Barrett & Needham 1988, 136; Brück 1999, 152). It is difficult, however, to see any deliberate strategy in their deposition. Neither was actually complete, although both were found below the level to which the site was stripped, and their findspots — at the top and bottom of widely separated and different sized pits — were quite different. But to find, on the one hand, two similar vessels of a rare type in such close proximity, and, on the other, so little other contemporary pottery, indicates that the site had a specialized role during the period.

Late Bronze Age

The fresh condition of the pottery indicates that it was deposited soon after use: we can be reasonably confident that it represents the whole range of the pottery broken, and, by implication, the pottery used on this part of the site. This is of particular interest in view of, firstly, the lack of fine wares present — both in terms of form and fabric — and, secondly, the evidence for the curation of damaged pottery provided by vessel 21. The lack of fine wares in particular contrasts with contrary evidence from later LBA and LBA/EIA assemblages such as those from Selsey (Seager Thomas 2001) and Harting Beacon (Morris 1978; Hamilton 1979). The pottery from Climping gives an impression of cultural impoverishment. Whether this was occasioned by poverty, was a function of the activities that occurred on site, or relates to Sussex early LBA culture as a whole is unsure. The recovery of far-traveled and — presumably — expensive quern stones from the complex (Appendix 2) militates against the idea of poverty. Moreover, fine wares are absent from several other Sussex early LBA assemblages including Knapp Farm (Hamilton 1997), Selsey Golf Link's Lane (White 1934), and Ashington (Hamilton 1994), suggesting that the area was indeed culturally impoverished. This view contrasts with — but does not necessarily conflict with — evidence from both contemporary and later LBA sites including Queen Mary's Hospital (Adkins & Needham 1985, 46) and Selsey Seaside Field (Seager Thomas 2001) for the concentration in single locations of a much wider range of activities. Early LBA Sussex was different. Whatever the reason for the contrast, however, the succession of deposits of pottery in the same tradition at Climping indicates stable settlement during the period in which this tradition and the activities to which it was related were current.

(December 2003)

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Appendix 1. The fire-cracked flint

by Luke Barber

A total of 1,229 pieces of fire-cracked flint, from twenty different contexts, weighing a total of more than 27,800g was collected from the site (both the Phase I and Phase II work). The vast majority (927 pieces weighing 25,620g) were recovered from Context 33.

Appendix 2. The foreign stone

by Mike Seager Thomas

Of the six early first millennium BC sites excavated in the Littlehampton area, only Ford Acres, Yapton and Wickbourne yielded 'foreign stone.' That from Yapton is lost and, with the exception of some 'beach pebbles' (Cartwright 1987, 65), cannot now be assessed; but the assemblages from Climping and Wickbourne (Gilkes 1993, 13) were retained for study.

Both included Lower Greensand and water-rolled, metamorphic quartzite. In addition, the current site yielded clasts of carstone, water-rolled chert and a well-bedded, siliceous sandstone with shell casts resembling fossil-fauna occurring locally in the London Clay (in Bognor Rock) (Table 4). Of interest are, firstly, the origins of the material and what this means in terms of resource procurement; and, secondly, the use to which the material was put.

Context	Stone type	Gms.	Qty.	Use wear	Burnt	Source
33	Lower greensand	459	6	3	4	Hythe Beds, west of the Arun
	Quartzite	291	6	1	6	Beach deposit
	Carstone (ferruginous sandstone)	149	1	1	1	?Hythe Beds or Folkestone Beds
	Chert	22	1	0	1	Beach deposit
81	Lower greensand	33	2	0	2	Hythe Beds, west of the Arun
	Well bedded, siliceous sandstone	146	2	0	2	Unknown

Table 4. Frequencies of Foreign Stone (by context).

The greensand is of a siliceous variety, which comes from the Hythe Beds to the west of the River Arun. One clast, from Context 33, resembles material from near Lodsworth. It is the earliest find of Lodsworth Stone to have been made on the Coastal Plain.[2] Other early first millennium BC finds of Lodsworth stone from the area include a whole but fragmented saddle quern from Wickboune, which — like Climping — is immediately downstream of the source area, and quern fragments from Selsey Coast Guard Station and Selsey East Beach (Seager Thomas 2001).

These finds may suggest a distribution network based on the River Arun and the coast. Carstone occurs in a variety of locations. That from the current site most closely resembles material from the Low Weald, but it is impossible to

[2] Lodsworth-type Lower Greensand has since been reported from an MBA context on the Angmering Bypass site.

rule out a source elsewhere: for example, in the Clay-with-flints. The quartzite and the chert is either from an active or a fossil beach and suggests, but does not necessarily imply, the utilization of local coastal resources.

Three fragments of greensand retain traces of picked and ground surfaces comparable to those of complete saddle querns (e.g. from Wickbourne). A quartzite fragment retains traces of polish. The carstone has picked and smoothed faces at right angles to each other. All are rubbers or grinders of some sort. Differences in colour, consistency and fracture pattern between naturally occurring stone and the current assemblage indicate that most of it was burned prior to discard. The same is true of the quern from Wickbourne. It is possible that the latter was selected for burning, either as part of a fragmentation ritual (cf. Brück 2006) or for functional reasons (Seager Thomas 1999, 46), but the association in Context 33 of burnt 'foreign stone' artefacts with large quantities of fire-cracked-flint (Appendix 1), probably rules out their particular selection for burning. The excavations at the current site gave no indications why stone was burned.

Appendix 4. Yapton Road, Climping, Bronze Age pottery

Louise Rayner & Mike Seager Thomas

An assemblage of 625 prehistoric sherds weighing 4311 grams was recovered from both the site. Three typo-chronological groups were distinguishable: Biconical Urn, dated to the Early Bronze Age, Deverel-Rimbury (DR), dated to the Middle Bronze Age, and post Deverel-Rimbury (PDR), dated to the Late Bronze Age (Seager Thomas 2008). The last two groups are inextricably mixed, which perhaps indicates a transitional assemblage (Appendix 5).

The assemblage has been examined on a context by context basis and recorded in line with guidelines set out by the Prehistoric Ceramics Research Group (PCRG 1991). Sherds were examined (by Rayner) with a x20 binocular microscope in order to identify the main fabric inclusions and group the assemblage accordingly. The scarcity of diagnostic sherds means the dating of the assemblage relies heavily on fabric characterization.

The pottery is in variable condition, with some surfaces intact and conjoining sherds present. Aside from 288 sherds from a single probably transitional DR/PDR cremation vessel, the context groups are mainly small and incorporate few feature sherds (rims, decorated body sherds etc.). The PDR assemblage in particular shows signs of weathering/ abrasion. These latter sherds may have been re-deposited.

Prehistoric fabrics

The majority of the assemblage is flint-tempered, and the fabrics typical of the Middle and Late Bronze Age periods locally. The exceptions to this are grog-tempered sherds from contexts [213] and [272], which may derive from a single vessel, and are Early Bronze Age in character, and two grog-tempered sherds of probable Late Iron Age/Early Roman date.

> *Grog, G*
> c. 20% very coarse sand-sized grog (which is very difficult to see against a near identical matrix), *c.* 10% fine sand- to coarse sand-sized, red Fe, and rare (not precisely quantifiable) fine quartz sand. Body sherds at *c.* 11mm thick. Yapton Road 1.

The flint-tempered fabrics were classified into six groups on the basis of size and sorting of inclusions (FF, FMF, MF, MCF, CF1 and CF2). CF1 and 2 are both coarse tempered fabrics and these are the most abundant by count (although there is clearly a bias in this measure as the 288 sherds from context [27] have

been classified as this fabric sub-type but are known to represent only one vessel).

Fine Flint, FF
7 to 10% medium to sand-sized burnt flint, 2% medium to coarse sand-sized, red, Fe-oxide nodules, and *c.* 25% fine to medium (?) quartz sand. Body sherds at 3mm thick. Yapton Road 7.

Fine to medium flint, FMF
5% fine to (rare) coarse sand-sized burnt flint and common (not precisely quantifiable) fine quartz sand. Has a slightly waxy feel as though it contains grog or Fe-oxides, neither of which are actually visible. Body sherds at *c.* 6mm thick. No typologically diagnostic sherds occurred in this fabric but it occurred in several definitively LBA contexts.

Medium flint, MF
5–15% medium to very coarse sand-sized burnt flint and *c.* 25% fine quartz sand. Body sherds at 5mm thick. Yapton Road 4 and 5.

Medium to coarse flint, MCF
5% medium sand- to medium granule-sized burnt flint (with an emphasis on the larger size grade) and *c.* 25% medium quartz sand. Body sherds at 7mm thick. Yapton Road 2 and 6. Yapton Road 2 has a waxy feel like fabric FMF.

Coarse flint, CFG
5–10% sand- to very large granule-sized burnt flint, very rare small pebble sized burnt flint, unquantifiable grog, and 5% medium quartz sand. Body sherds from 8 to 12mm thick. Yapton Road 3.

Coarse flint, CF
10 to 15% fine sand- to medium granule-sized burnt flint, 25% fine to medium quartz sand, and sparse (not precisely quantifiable) coarse sand sized, red, Fe-oxide nodules. Body sherds at *c.* 12mm. No typologically diagnostic sherds occurred in this fabric but it was directly associated with Yapton Road 2.

The date and affinities of the prehistoric assemblage

Biconical Urn
Grog-tempered Pot 1 is the earliest vessel present (Fig. 4). The rim is slightly everted and it has a slack, poorly demarcated shoulder. The sherds from [213]

include conjoining rim and shoulder sherds and although direct joins with the sherds from [272] are not present, they are very similar in appearance and wall thickness. To date, the county has yielded no exact parallels for it, but its weak shoulder has a number of local analogues (Seager Thomas 2008, fig. 4), whilst similar everted rims come from the Bronze Age funerary monument near Crowlink, East Sussex (Hamilton 2001, fig 13), and nearer-to in the flint-tempered Charmandean Biconical Urn (Seager Thomas 2008, fig. 4). Closer regional parallels for it come from Guildford (Needham 1987, fig. 5.3) and Dorset (Calkin 1962). Both these and the pot from Charmandean had applied 'inverted horseshoe' handles, and it is suggested that the Yapton Road pot was formerly supplied with one of these as well.

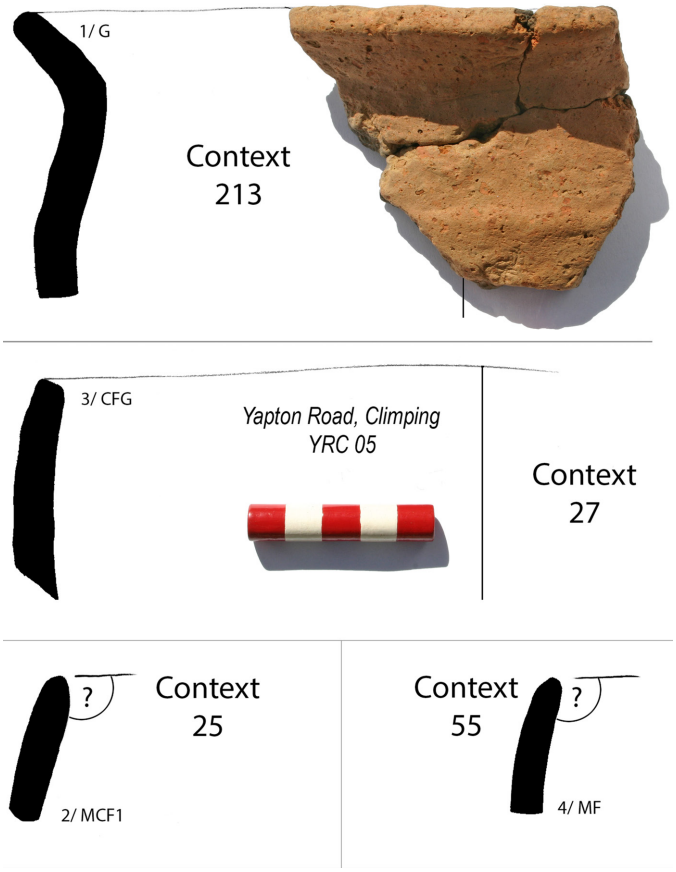

Figure 4. Biconical Urn (1), Deverel-Rimbury and early (?)post Deverel-Rimbury pottery

Deverel-Rimbury

DR in the present assemblage is represented primarily by its fabrics, particularly CF2, which occurs in DR form only, but also MF–CF1, which are paralleled in DR assemblages from elsewhere on the Coastal Plain (e.g. Roundstone Lane,

Angmering). Typologically simple upright or slightly flowerpot-shaped jars with flat or rounded profile rims dominate (Pots 2 and 4) (Fig. 4).

Deverel-Rimbury/ post Deverel-Rimbury
Possibly intermediate between DR and PDR is Pot 3 from pit [26] (Fig. 4). Its fabric (CF1), the even thickness of the sherds comprising it, and its lumpy, roughly smoothed finish are all DR traits, and any single body sherd from it would, in isolation, probably have been attributed to this tradition, but its shouldered form and hooked rim are PDR. A group of three similar jars comes from a pit excavated at Beddingham Roman Villa, East Sussex (Seager Thomas 2006).

Post Deverel-Rimbury
Such convex-sided jar shapes continue, albeit usually in thinner, more conspicuously fingered variants, into the LBA (e.g. Pot 8) (Fig. 5), to which the rest of the present assemblage can be assigned on fabric and typological grounds. Notable traits include the small range of fabrics into which the assemblage can be divided (four only, if we include intermediate fabric CF1), a characteristic often diagnostic of early, PDR plain ware assemblages (Seager Thomas 2008, 41); the absence of decoration; and the form of Pot 5 (Fig. 5), which, although by no means restricted to early assemblages, was associated with them on the Plain at Centenary House, Worthing (Seager Thomas 2002c), and Kingston Buci (Curwen 1931, fig. 22).

Site provenance

The contextual associations of the assemblage have been considered for the larger, typologically more diagnostic groups of pottery, in order to identify any deposition patterns or groups that may contribute to understanding the function of features.

Of great interest is the presence on the interior surface of EBA sherds from context [272] of what look like carbonized residues. Could the Biconical Urn have been used for cooking at some point? If so, it has profound implications for our understanding of the way EBA pottery was used locally, since, on the basis of most local evidence, a cinerary role for it was the norm (cf. Seager Thomas 2008, 25 & 29).

Less controversially, carbonized residues also occur on the interior of a number of LBA sherds suggesting *their* use as cooking vessels.

On the same theme, a pot from pit [220], had residues on its interior and exterior surfaces (Pot 8), and was associated with other evidence of burning. An adjacent posthole [136] also contained sherds from vessels that had been burnt, as did the second nearby posthole [130]. These may be contemporary and represent closely related activity.

Finally, pit [226] yielded one of the larger groups of pottery with some 90 sherds from a mixture of vessels recovered. This is suggestive of general rubbish disposal.

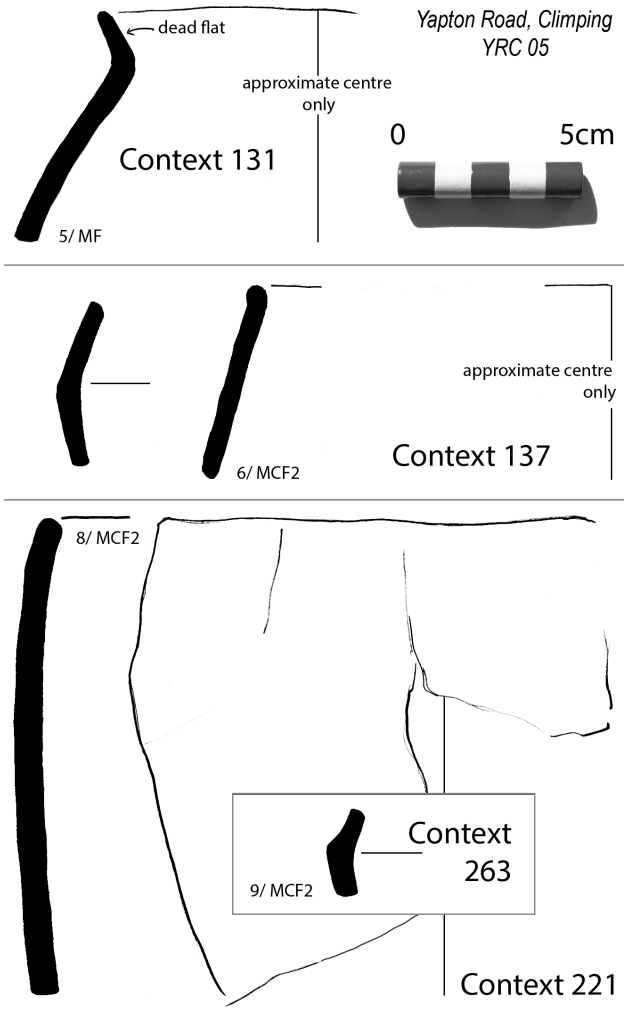

Figure 5. Early post Deverel-Rimbury pottery

Potential and significance of the prehistoric pottery

The last twenty years has seen the excavation of an increasing number of Bronze Age sites on the West Sussex Coastal Plain and the site at Yapton Road, Climping, compliments this dataset. The Biconical Urn is of importance as this vessel type is rare in Sussex (Hamilton 2001, 61; Seager Thomas 2008, table 3). The assemblages of DR and early PDR pottery are typical of the region,

Sussex as a whole having many assemblages of this approximate date (Hamilton 2003, 71). The assemblage, therefore, adds little to our understanding of the pottery of these traditions, its principal role being to providing the dating for, and some characterization of features that yielded it. On the other hand, the transitional MBA/LBA material present is unusual, and will contribute greatly to characterizing such material locally. Finally, the location of cremation burial (Pot 3) within the field system is of interest and contributes usefully to the study of ritual activity within later Bronze Age landscapes.

Catalogue of Prehistoric feature sherds

1) Weak shoulder and out-turned neck of Biconical Urn/ food vessel with rounded rim. Fabric G. Red buff exterior and dark grey interior, roughly smoothed surfaces. Context 215
2) Rim of convex-sided (?) jar. Fabric MCF1. Irregularly fired, roughly smoothed surfaces. DR. CONTEXT 25 (S1)
3) Squared, in-turned rim of large convex-sided jar. Fabric CFG. Irregularly fired but mostly oxidized, lumpy, roughly smoothed surfaces. DR/ PDR. CONTEXT 27
4) Rounded rim of straight or convex-sided jar. Fabric CMF (dense). Irregularly fired, heavily weathered surfaces. DR. CONTEXT 55
5) Out-turned rim/ neck and rounded shoulder of shouldered jar. Fabric MF. Burnt (?) heavily weathered surfaces. PDR. CONTEXT 131
6) Weakly angular shoulder, heavily-gritted base and externally beaded rim of shouldered jar. Fabric MCF2. Heavily fingered/ finger furrowed. Burnt heavily weathered surfaces. PDR. CONTEXT 137
7) Angular shoulder or base of bowl. Fabric FF. Oxidized, weathered surfaces. PDR. CONTEXT 205 (not illustrated)
8) Thin bodied, slightly convex-sided jar with rounded rim. Fabric MCF2. Heavily fingered/ finger furrowed. Irregularly fired, heavily weathered surfaces. PDR. CONTEXT 221
9) Angular shoulder and concave neck of shouldered jar. Fabric MCF2. Fingered. Irregularly fired, heavily weathered surfaces. PDR. CONTEXT 263

(May 2010)

Appendix 5. Fabric quantification/ dating — Yapton Road (YRC 05)

Context	Fabrics/ date													
	EBA													
			MBA											
					LBA									
	G		CF2		MF		MCF		CF1		FF		FMF	
	sherd numbers/ weight in grams													
3 TR 2					2	2							1	1
16 TR 3							2	9						
19 TR 5			52	170										
15 TR 7					2	6								
16 TR 8					2	2								
4 TR 12					5	13								
21 S2					3	1								
21 S3			2	15										
23 S3	1	1			1	1								
25 S1			12	189			1	11						
26 TR 12									9	62				
27									288	2000				
39					1	4								
55					1	16								
65					1	5								
73									1	9				
131					10	107								
137					4	3	24	282						
147							4	43						
167					1	1								
201							5	34						
203							3	3						
205					2	1					4	3		
213	6	110												
221					5	16	19	332						
227			2	35			2	74			2	9	82	377
231							12	74						
231 terminus					8	14								
245					6	48	1	67			1	1		
251			3	19										
259													1	1
261			1	28										
261 S1					2	2	4	10					1	1
261 S2					3	2					1	1	1	1
261 SW end			1	1	2	2							1	1
261 terminus			3	21	4	11								
263							7	20						
272	2	50												
TOTAL	2	50	4	22	11	17	7	20	1	9	1	1	3	3
Red = comprises/ includes *typologically* diagnostic sherd/ s														

Early Bronze Age pot 1